California State Parks
Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS)
Statewide Park Program
Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were derived from 14 technical assistance workshops held throughout the state from October 5, 2009, to November 19, 2009. More than 500 participants attended these meetings. The FAQS are ordered by page number as given in the Statewide Park Program Application Guide, dated April 1, 2009.

Guide cover: How do I send my application to the Office of Grants and Local Services?
Applications must be mailed or shipped (US Postal Service, FEDEX, UPS etc.), and postmarked no later than March 1, 2010. They can also be hand delivered no later than March 1, 2010. Close of business for OGALS is 5 PM. See the cover of the Statewide Park Program Application Guide for the mailing or physical address.

Page 2: Eligible Projects. Could a project application include only the construction of a restroom or parking lot?
No. A restroom or parking lot can be part of the project, but it must also include the creation of a new recreational opportunity.

Page 2: Eligible Projects. Is a dog park a recreation feature?
Yes. The list on page 2 is not an exclusive list of projects.

Page 2: Eligible Projects. My department wants to buy property for a park from another department in our city. Is this cost eligible for reimbursement if we are awarded a grant?
No. The city would be using grant money to pay itself for the acquisition of land that it already owns.

Page 3: Eligible Applicant. Are school districts eligible to apply for the program?
No. See the list of eligible applicants on page 3. Note that DISTRICT appears in small caps and is defined on pages 59-60. A school district does not meet the definition of a district as provided by legislative direction in AB 31 (DeLeon). A school district could partner with an eligible applicant by leasing property to the applicant.

Page 3: Partnerships. Do I get extra points for a partnership?
No. OGALS encourages partnerships but no extra points are given for them.

Page 4: Application Deadline. When is the application deadline for Round One?
The application deadline is March 1, 2010. At the time of the Application Guide's publication, the Legislature had not appropriated funds so the date was not yet available. Funds for Round Two have not been appropriated at this time. See the OGALS website for updates.

Page 4: Second Round. When will the second round begin?
OGALS won't know until the funds are appropriated by the Legislature for Round Two. It should occur no sooner than six months after Round One awards are announced.

Page 4: Grant Amounts. Are the minimum and maximum grant amounts on page 4 per applicant, or per application?
The minimum and maximum grant amounts are for each application. An applicant may receive multiple grant awards in one round.

Page 4: Regional distribution of funds. Is there a regional distribution of funds in this program?
Statewide Park Program legislation does not mandate a regional distribution of funds.

Page 4: Prorating a grant amount. Will OGALS award less than the amount applied for?
No. OGALS does not prorate grant amounts. Under-funded projects often result in incomplete projects.

Page 4: Match Requirement. Is there a match requirement?
There is no match requirement.

Page 4: No Match. Do I get additional points by having a match?
No. Application scores are based only on the applicant's responses to the nine Project Selection Criteria beginning on page 26.

Page 4: Appropriation Date. What's the date of appropriation for Round One funds?
The date of appropriation for Round One is July 1, 2009. The appropriation date was not yet established when the Application Guide was finalized.

NOTE: The date of appropriation for Round Two has not yet been established. This means that the starting date as to when eligible costs can be incurred for Round Two grant awards has not yet been established.

Page 6: Eligible Costs. If funding is granted for my project, when can I start incurring eligible costs?
If a grant is awarded through Round One, eligible costs incurred back to July 1, 2009, may be reimbursed after the grant contract is encumbered (signed by both parties).

The Application Guide was finalized before the July 1, 2009, date of appropriation. The Grant Performance Period for Round One is July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2017. The July 1, 2009, date of appropriation is the starting date of when eligible costs can be incurred and reimbursed if a grant is awarded through Round One. Note that the July 1, 2009, start date is only for Round One grant awards. Round Two funds have not yet been appropriated, so the starting date for eligible costs for Round Two grants has not yet been established by the Legislature.

Page 6: Encumbrance. The word encumbrance appears in the third box of the flow chart on page 6. What is encumbrance?
Encumbrance occurs when both parties have signed the grant agreement. It means there is a legal obligation upon the State.

Page 11: Authorizing Resolution. Do I need a separate authorizing resolution for each application?
No. A single resolution can serve for multiple applications if the resolution specifies the name of each proposed project.   The names of the various projects in the resolution should match the project application forms.

Page 15: Cost Estimate. Should the estimated project costs be current at the time of application or based on projected costs?
Project costs should be based on when the expenditures will occur during the grant performance period. Do not short-change your project. OGALS wants your project to succeed if awarded a grant.

Page 15: Contingency. Can I put in contingency as a line item cost?
As noted above, you may build contingency into the individual lump-sum costs of each recreation feature or major support amenity, but don't include it as a separate line item in the Grant Scope/Cost Estimate Form.

Page 17: Pledges for additional funds to complete the project. Do pledges count as committed funds?
No. Committed funds must be in hand or contractually obligated. See also the definition of committed funds, page 59.

Page 18: CEQA Completion. Do we get more points if CEQA is complete?
No. CEQA completion is not scored in this program.

Page 18: CEQA Completion. The middle of page 18 states what is required if CEQA compliance is not complete at the time of application. Can we submit the plan for CEQA Compliance instead of the CEQA initial study document?
There is no "or" between each required item, so OGALS needs both the initial study <u>and</u> the plan for CEQA compliance. The initial study is a check list that you can download using this link: http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/Appendix_G.html
Here's more information about the initial study:
http://www1.ciwmb.ca.gov/PermitToolbox/CEQA/Documents/InitialStudy/Contents.htm

Page 18: CEQA Compliance. Can we do NEPA instead?
NEPA cannot substitute for CEQA. CEQA compliance is required by the Proposition 84 Bond Act.

Page 21: Land Tenure. I have some complicated land tenure issues. May I send in the land tenure agreements prior to submitting the remainder of my application packet?
Please do. Send these documents to OGALS as soon as possible so they can be reviewed.

Page 21: Land Tenure. If I own the property, do I need to provide the land tenure form on page 23?
No. If you own the project site property, please read the top of page 21 and provide item #1 on page 21. As stated on the top of the land tenure form on page 23, the form is only required if the applicant is going to lease the property from another land owner.

Page 21: Land Tenure. If I will acquire the property to become the land owner, do I need to provide the land tenure form on page 23?
No. As stated on the top of the Land Tenure Form, it is only required if the applicant is going to lease the property from another land owner, instead of acquiring it.

For acquisition projects, we only need the County Assessor's Parcel map and Willing Seller Letter as explained on page 24. The applicant does not need to meet any of the land tenure requirements shown on pages 21-22, because the purpose of acquisition is to obtain land tenure.

Page 24: Concept Level Site Plan. How large should the concept level site plan be?
No larger than 11" x 17".

Page 24: Concept Level Site Plan. How detailed should the concept level site plan be?
Only a bird's eye view of the project site, nothing fancy. OGALS does not require a blueprint or construction-ready design documents.

Page 24: Concept Level Site Plan. What if we discover we need to change the location of Recreation Features within the park, but all of the Grant Scope items will still be included in the project?
If this happens, let us know the reason.

Page 24: Concept Level Site Plan. If I am building a community center, how much office space is too much?
The majority of the community center must be designed for recreational purposes. Office space necessary to provide community services such as counseling, tutoring, mentoring, and the general operation of the center itself is acceptable. Office space associated with activities not related to the facility's principle use is not permitted. OGALS can review a design sketch in advance.

Page 26: Responding to the Project Selection Criteria. Do I need to restate the entirety of a question in the narrative?
No, only include an outline response using the same Project Selection Criteria numbers, titles, and letters of Project Selection Criteria 1-9.

Page 26: Criteria #1, Community FactFinder. Can I print multiple FactFinder Reports?
Yes. You may print as many as you'd like, but you can only submit one with your application. See also technical assistance, page 45.

Page 26: Criteria #1, Community FactFinder. The FactFinder may be showing some acreage as a park that's not actually a park, or doesn't show an existing park. To whom can I report this?
Send an email to parkupdates@parks.ca.gov.
1. Include a description/explanation of the issue in the email.
2. To give us a reference point for the property in question, create a report using the FactFinder.   Place the push pin on the property in question, then select "create report." A PDF report will be created. Save the PDF report to your computer (like you would save a Word document), attach it to the email, and send it.

Page 26: Community FactFinder. The circle created by the FactFinder overlaps another jurisdiction. Does the area outside my jurisdiction count for park acreage or demographic information?
Yes. Jurisdictional boundaries are not considered in this program.

Page 28: Community FactFinder, Criteria #2-B. Why does the FactFinder Report state "Number of people below poverty line" when the criterion asks for "Number of families below poverty line."

At the time when the Application Guide was finalized, OGALS was told that the Community FactFinder would report the number of families in poverty. OGALS was later told that the number of people in poverty was being reported rather than families.

This label/name change in the report from families to people will not affect the ranking of any applications statewide, because FactFinder reports have always used the number of people in poverty. Although the label was originally incorrect, the demographic function has been consistent. The number reported was always the number of people below poverty, and will be used for all statewide applications for Criteria #2 – B. You can create a new report, but it is not necessary.

Page 30: Expanding an Existing Park. If we don't own the adjacent park, and we plan to rebuild our park, is that an expansion of an existing park?
Yes. The land is still adjacent regardless of who owns it. Therefore your project is an expansion of an existing park and would score 10 points. See also page 46.

Page 30: Criteria #3, Creation of a New Park. If we build a new park on school property, is that a new park?
Yes, if the school property is not in or adjacent to a park that existed before July 1, 2009. If there is an existing park adjacent to the school, the project scores 10 points, instead of 12. See also technical assistance on pages 46-48 and definition of new park on page 61.

Page 33-37: Criteria #4, Community Based Planning. Do surveys count as meetings?
A survey is not a meeting. The purpose of having meetings is to promote a group dynamic, with participants building upon the ideas of one another. Group discussions can lead to a more in-depth understanding of what the residents need. See the definition of "meeting" on page 61 and technical assistance on pages 49-50.

Page 33-37: Criteria #4, Community Based Planning. Should the application include sign up sheets from our meetings? No. OGALS only wants the items requested in the Application Guide. Keep back-up documentation and anything else generated during your public meetings as OGALS may review them during a site visit, or if an audit is conducted after a grant award.

Page 33-37: Criteria #4, Community Based Planning. If the meeting documents are not in English, must we translate them for possible review?
No. Translations are not required. Just keep the documents as noted in the response above.

Page 34-35: Criteria #4B, Community Based Planning. Must each meeting have a broad representation of residents?
No. We're looking at the combined set of meetings. The cumulative effect of the meetings should result in a broad representation of residents. For example, meeting with youth at a school, seniors at a center, or parents at a PTA meeting may not get you a broad representation in each meeting, but when each meeting is added with others, the combination does.

Page 34-35: Criteria #4B, Community Based Planning methods to invite residents. You get three points if you use three different methods for all of the community meetings, right?
Yes. The scoring rubric states "the combined set of meetings."

Page 36-37: Criteria #4C, community based planning. Should Goals 1, 2 and 3 be achieved in each meeting?
Criteria #4 A, B, and C on pages 33-37 are interlinked. The goal of #4-A on page 33 is to have convenient meetings at different times to accommodate residents with various family and working schedules. Residents may be able to only attend one meeting that best fits their schedules. For this reason, in fairness to residents who can only attend one meeting, OGALS recommends using Goals 1-3 in each meeting. The outcome of the meetings will most accurately incorporate a broad representation of residents' needs and ideas if Goals 1-3, as explained on pages 36-37, are reached during each meeting.

Page 36-37: Criteria #4C, community based planning. Can we explain budget limitations for a project to help residents determine their priorities during the meetings?
Yes. Read the last three bullet points on page 50.

Pages 39-40: Criteria #5, **Sustainable Design Techniques**, **LEED Certification. The guide states that I can provide a plan to achieve a Silver Level of LEED Certification instead of responding to Criteria #5, parts A and B, and get the maximum points.   What should the plan include?**
Your response to Criteria #5 on page 38-40 should include the cost of obtaining the certification. The plan should include the key steps and estimated date for achieving Silver Level of LEED Certification. Please see www.usgbc.org for more information. Additional note: make sure you build in the cost when formulating your overall project budget as it's an eligible grant cost.

Page 38: Criteria #5, Sustainable Design Techniques. How will OGALS verify that we met our stated goals in our sustainable design?
At the final site visit OGALS will verify that your project includes the sustainable elements specified in your application.   OGALS will withhold final payment until the elements are complete.   This requirement also pertains to the LEED certification. See also pages 39, 40, and technical assistance on page 51.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Hours of Operation. When snowing, my park is not open seven days a week. Will the project be ineligible?
No. Weather cannot be controlled.   Answer Criteria #7, A and B, and explain why the park is closed and when it will be open.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Hours of Operation. The scoring rubric states that the project must be open 7 days a week. Must the project be open on holidays?
No.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Fees. Do activity fees affect the score, such as a baseball or soccer league?
If the activity fee is required at all times to enter and use the project, then it does affect the score. For example, if the project is a soccer field, and only soccer teams can use the field, then the fee charged to join the team/league counts. Using the same example, if residents can use the soccer field without paying, tell OGALS when the field will be available for the residents.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Fees. Can I charge more to non-residents to use my city's facility?
You cannot apply differences in admission or other fees on the basis of residence for state-funded projects.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Fees. We have membership or daily entrance fees that, when calculated, exceed $30 per month per person. However, we will have scholarships for low income residents. Can our response be based on the scholarships?
No. The entrance or membership fee scale will be based on what any resident would pay to be able to use the park before having to prove they are eligible for a scholarship.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Fees. Does the renting of the facility for parties or other special functions affect my answer to Criteria #7?
Special events not part of a facility's usual daily entrance fees are excluded from the fee calculation.

Page 41: Criteria #7, Fees. How would parking fees affect the score?
If the only way to enter the park is by driving, the parking fee will count as an entrance fee. If pedestrians can enter the park without paying to enter, the parking fee would not affect the score.

Page 55: Acquisition Costs. Does the 25% limit on pre-construction apply to acquisition?
No.   There is no 25% cap on acquisition. For acquisition,100% of the grant amount can pay for acquisition if your additional committed funds are paying for the development portion.   Note that acquisition-only projects are not allowed in this program.   All acquisition projects must have a development component.
See also *italics* at bottom of page 2 and top of page 3, and pages 55-56.